

A FILE OF INFANTRYMEN.

"For Three Years, or During the War"—At Home in a Shelter Tent, and Abroad with "Three Days' Rations and Forty Rounds of Ammunition."

By JOHN McELROY.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In this war-story, the hero, Walter Armistead, is a youth who is employed in the composing room of an afternoon daily newspaper in Chicago. The country is on the eve of civil war. News of the bombardment of Fort Sumter creates much excitement. A fight between David Bronson, a Unionist, and Dick Morgan, a secessionist, both compositors, results in a victory for the former. Walter, whose ideas of the situation are yet unformed, has a discussion with Bronson, who sets forth loyally the conditions that confront the Government. Walter goes down town with Bronson to watch the bulletins at the newspaper office. Secessionist sympathizers, denizens of Chicago's slums, air their opinions of loyal citizens, and express desires that some of them would afford an opportunity for an encounter. They are suddenly confronted by one whose voice and manner as he bids them "good evening" is disquieting, to say the least. His name is O'Neil, and he is an ex-Sergeant of Regulars. His war-like attitude and his evident desire for a fight effectually quiet the boasters.

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CHAPTER VI.—(continued).

SECESSIONIST COMPOSITORS CREATE DISORDER AND ARE EJECTED—THE CALL FOR TROOPS TO DEFEND THE NATION'S LIFE—A HUMOROUS PASSAGE.

For some hours afterward all the dispatches that came in told of the manner in which the news of the overt act of the secessionists was received at various points in the insurrectionary section, and in the Nation generally.

Those from Southern cities described general rejoicings, with ringing of bells, firing of cannon, bonfires, processions, and enthusiastic congratulatory speeches. Those from Northern, Eastern, and Western cities were as ominous as nature's preparations for a tempest.

Gloomy, smoldering rage, that flamed forth like the breath of a furnace, was manifesting itself everywhere. Men of all shades of political belief were vying with each other in denouncing the heinous crime against free Government, and monster meetings were applauding them till the welkin rang. Everywhere men, individually, and in companies, and in regiments, were offering their services to the Government for the vindication of its authority; everywhere bankers, men of fortune, moneyed institutions, and great corporations were tendering the Administration their wealth to use in defending the integrity of the Nation.

Bronson's spirits rose as he read. Walter began to comprehend more thoroughly that the voice of patriotism spoke louder than the clamor of partisanship, and even Old Jo began to faintly hope that the putting forth of the might of the Nation might perhaps stamp out the insurrection in its incipient. Correspondingly Morgan and Russell grew more morose and savage—though they followed the example of the rest in refraining from commenting aloud upon the news.

At length there came a sheet of tissue which Wilson in his hurry scissored in two without reading it, and hung upon the hook.

Morgan and Russell had just finished their "takes," placed them upon the galley, and came to the copy-look for more. They drew off the two "takes," and started for their cases, reading the copy as they went. Both halted abruptly, as they comprehended the meaning of the dispatch; both faces grew black with anger, both crumpled the copy in their hands and flung it upon the floor, and Morgan shouted out with an oath that he "would not set that up." Said he: "I'd rather die than raise my little finger to help that Abolition mongrel at Washington trample on the Southern people."

All the rest dropped their composing sticks and left their cases; two or three of the more impulsive ran to the imposing stones to snatch up the iron side-sticks. Inky picked up a metal cut weighing a half pound, and drew it to throw. Morgan and Russell thrust their right hands into their bosoms, and grasped the handles of the bowie knives which, in anticipation of trouble, they had placed in the inside pockets of their vests before entering the office.

But, for once, Old Jo rose promptly to the level of the occasion. Stepping between the frowning combatants, he called out authoritatively:

"Boys! lay those side-sticks down immediately! Morgan and Russell, put on your coats and leave the office instantly! If you stay a minute I'll whistle for the police, and it'll go mighty rough with you."

Morgan and Russell obeyed, and as they did so the others laid down the side-sticks, and Inky regretfully restored the cut, which it would have delighted him to throw, to its place in the form. Reaching the head of the stairs, Morgan turned and made his adieu.

"Well, good-by, boys! We're going now. Dixie, the land of flowers, is our destination. We'll remember you to Beauregard. You'll be likely to see us again some time this Summer; we're coming back with an excursion party conducted by Gens. Buckner and Pillow. I'll be on my way, then, and you'll be very tired of this whole business. By, by, now."

There was another movement for the side-sticks, and Inky reached for the cut, but Morgan and Russell were already far down the stairs.

The crumpled copy was picked up from the floor and smoothed out, and found to read:

WHEREAS, The laws of the United States have been and now are opposed in some of the States by combinations too powerful to be suppressed in the ordinary way, I therefore call for the militia of the several States of the Union, to suppress said combinations and execute the laws.

I appeal to all loyal citizens to facilitate

and aid this effort to maintain the laws and integrity of the National Union, and the perpetuity of popular Government, and redress wrongs long enough endured. The first service assigned the forces will probably be to repress the forts, places and property which have been seized from the Union. The utmost care must be taken, consistent with this object, to avoid the devastation, destruction or interference with the property of peaceful citizens in any part of the country. I hereby command all persons composing the aforesaid combinations to disperse within 20 days from date.

I hereby convene both Houses of Congress

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"Carse ye! Carse ye all!"

an' die to slow music. Then they

"Then the Kinch wuz to say:

"Come, lay on Macduff.

And damned be he who first cries hold, enough!"

"They were to fight with laths,

reg'lar broadsword style—three up

and three down—jest like Ned Forrest

and Jim Douglas in the last act of

Richard III. When the Kinch fell,

Inky was to run him through, and say:

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Blood-livin' Borygard, the Beetle-Browed Bandit of the Black Banner, who wuz to fight fur Secession. They were to toss each other a whole lot o' wind about dyin' fur their rights and sheddin' each other's heart's blood, and when Inky said:

"Traitor-r, do your worst! I defy thee!"

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